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AGAM-P (M) (21 Jan 69) FOR DS DC

29 January 1969

SUBJECT: Senior Officer Debriefing Program: Report of Colonel J. J. Beeson, III (U)

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1. Reference: AR 1 26, 4 November 1966, subject, Senior Officer Debriefing Program.

2. Transmitted herewith is the debriefing report of Colonel J. J. Beeson, III, former Deputy Senior Advisor, I Corps MACV.

3. The contents of this report and the opinions expressed therein should not be interpreted as reflecting the official opinion or view of the Department or the Army or any Army command, installation or agency.

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Country: Republic of South Vietnam, I Corps

Debrief Report by: Colonel John J. Beeson, III

Duty Assignments: Deputy Senior Advisor, I Corps

Inclusive Dates: 1 July 1967 - 19 August 1968 (U), (S)

Date of Report: 3 August 1968

I. Causative factors of the insurgency in I Corps, Republic of South Vietnam.

A. Political

1. (U) There are several political parties active in the Corps area. Although not directly causative factors in the insurgency they do contribute to its successes by their lack of unity and appeal to the common man. Major parties are the Dai Viet Quoc Dan Dang (DAI VIET) the Veit Nam Quoc Dan Dang (VNQDD). Additionally, there are two major Political/Religious groups the Buddhist and Catholic which are active in politics throughout the corps area.

2. (U) It is important to note that political activity is a very personalized affair. Individual political leaders have personal followings that may be drawn entirely from one of the above groups or may be composed of members of a large number of groups. Very often personnel relationships are more important in attracting supporters than are group ideologies or party platforms. The strength of the most important Political figures is almost always based on a constantly shifting coalition of support from a number of lesser leaders within the various political sub-groups. This situation is further complicated by the fact that individual members of one group can easily be members of one or more other groups.

3. (U) In addition to the parties named above which are basically Pro GVN/Anti-Communist, there is the communist party, officially called the Dang Nhan Dan Cach Mang - Peoples Revolution Party (PRP) and calls itself the party of the working class and laboring people of South Vietnam. It was established in order to further the appearance of a native communist effort in South Vietnam which is independent of Hanoi. It has been clearly established however, that the PRP was created by and is under the control of the communist party of North Vietnam, (the Dang Lao Dong Vietnam) also known as the Vietnamese workers Party.

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4. (U) Prior to the establishment of the PRG in January 1961, the principal communist political organization in South Vietnam was the Mat Tran Dan Toc Gioc Phong Lien Han or the National Liberation Front of South Vietnam (NLF). The NLF which was organized on 20 December 1960, provides a shadow government for the communist at both national and local levels. It too is under the overall control of the communist government in North Vietnam.

5. (U) During the last days of French colonial rule in Vietnam, the communist dominated Viet Minh was the most effective anti-French force in country and as a result received a great deal of popular support. Starting in 1960 the former Viet Minh organization at district, village and hamlet levels were increasingly tied together under the newly organized NLF. In doing this the communist created at the same time a number of functional sub-structures at the village level supporting and complementing the national organization, the NLF. The most important of these at the present time are believed to be the Farmer Liberation Association or the Hoi Cong Dan Giai Phong, the Youth Liberation Association or the Hoi Thanh Nien Giai Phong, and the Women's Liberation Association or the Hoi Phu Nu Giai Phong, these groups are responsible for organizing, disciplining, and obtaining the support of the rural women, youth and farmers. These three groups include virtually everyone not living in the large cities.

B. Military.

1. (U) Every Communist hamlet is supposed to maintain a squad of guerrillas (Du Kich). Where they exist, these squads usually average from three to five men each. Villages are required to have a platoon of 15 to 25 guerrillas. These local guerrilla forces are responsible for laying ambushes, sabotaging roads and generally working in close proximity to their home hamlets. They also provide supplies and intelligence to communist regional and main force units.

2. (U) The next step in the communist military establishment is the regional force (Dia Phuong Quan) sometimes called the local forces. These troops are better trained, better equipped and range farther than do the guerrillas. They are recruited and usually operate in one province. They are capable of conducting more sophisticated operations than the local guerrilla, but still operate on a comparatively small scale laying ambushes and making limited attacks on isolated outposts. They act as a screen for the communist main force and provide recruits to make up for losses in these units.

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3. (U) The elite force in the Viet Cong military establishment is the main force unit (Chu Luc). In theory, the troops that compose Viet Cong main units are better educated, more highly trained, and politically more reliable. The veteran main force trooper is cross trained in a large number of weapons, understands a wide range of complicated tactics and is generally a very experienced competent soldier. During the last two years, however, many of these mainforce units have been severely weakened by combat losses sustained in battles, they are usually replaced with less experienced regionals.

4. (U) Finally on the military side, there are increasingly larger numbers of regular North Vietnamese (NVA) operating in I CTZ. They were first introduced into South Vietnam by Hanoi to beef up the Viet Cong and to speed up the final phase of the destruction of ARVN. Currently however, NVA units are carrying out more and more of the fighting to include individual replacements within VC main force units.

C. Social and Economic.

1. Basic Determinant.

a. (U) Vietnamese values and attitudes have been determined by multiple and disparate factors; the most influential have been Vietnam's geographic location, its political and cultural domination by the Chinese and its conquest by the French.

b. (U) Vietnam's geographic location has played an important role in shaping its people and values and attitudes. Its proximity to China has influenced its entire history. Vietnam has long been an ethnical cross road. Many people have entered by sea while others came from interior Asia in the first push to the South. These peoples have included Indians, Malaysians, and Europeans; each has contributed to Vietnam cultural and political history.

c. (U) China's impact on Vietnam is evidenced in the pervasive influences of Buddhism, Confucianism and Taoism. Buddhism teaches that suffering is inherent in life and that the ways to salvation is moral self-purification. Taoism stresses the insignificance and weakness of man before the immensity of a universe filled with malignant spirits and demons. Although Confucianism as a cult faded into unimportance at the end of the 19th Century, its influence created remarkable unity of thought, ideals attitudes and behavior.

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As a system of social organization, Confucianism stresses the harmony of the universe. Each man, through education must learn his proper role in life in order to maintain continued universal balance. Although diverse in many ways, these religions or systems of thought share one common characteristic: They are deterministic. Destiny determines everything, man can do little to change the natural order.

d. (U) The opening of Vietnam by European missionaries in the sixteenth Century and French colonization in the 19th century exposed the Vietnamese to Western and Christian concepts. The nondeterministic western concepts of individual dignity and responsibility were easily adopted by many Vietnamese intellectuals and adds a philosophical foundation to Vietnamese Nationalism.

2. Basic values and attitudes.

a. (U) In contrast to most westerners, Vietnamese feel that progress and change are ordained by destiny and occur spasmodically rather than continuously. When combined with the Vietnamese willingness to accept authority, this view of progress and change results in an acceptance of one's situation. Thus, the average Vietnamese is likely to appear resigned or even fatalistic. At the same time, the belief in ordained spasmodic change means that an isolation incident may precipitate a disproportionate reaction on the part of the people. It may become the people's duty to help facilitate the predetermined and sanctioned change which they think has been signaled by the isolated incident.

b. (U) Confucianism stresses that the Group, particularly the family, always should take precedence over the individual. The good Vietnamese, influenced by his Confucian heritage, should always be willing to subordinate his interest to those of the group.

c. (U) This has tended to make most Vietnamese docile and willing to accept a high degree of regimentation. Rebellion is justified only when authority is abused or considered to be without legitimacy (as when foreigners attempt to dominate the country). Equally Confucianism placed high values on the importance of cooperation rather than opposition; ordinarily it is always better to cooperate than oppose. Traditionally most Vietnamese have owed primary loyalty to their family rather than to the state. A profound sense of Nationalism has existed in Vietnam for many years, however, and this feeling has been particularly strong among Vietnamese during the past two decades.

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d. (U) The Confucian ethic also stresses the importance of each individual playing the role that this status in life assigns to him. Many of these roles relate to family relations and implicit in the ethic is the understanding that the family must be provided for. Thus, the desire for economic security for one's family plays an important role in almost every Vietnamese's life. In rural Vietnam this means ownership of land, good crops, good harvests, and full rice bowls. In urban areas, however, the need to obtain and keep a job means many persons lives.

D. Ideological and personal motivation. Those who serve the VC do so for a number of different reasons. An enthusiastic volunteer for example, may view life quite differently from a reluctant draftee. For convenience, VC personnel are grouped into several categories and discussed respectively.

1. (U) The Marxist. Some become VC solely because they are intellectually attracted to the political theories of Marxism. Generally these intellectuals believe Marxism offers a means for achieving collective progress and national freedom. These Marxists are likely to be deeply committed to the VC and almost fanatical in their devotion.,

2. (U) The Nationalist. During the period from 1946 - 1954 many Vietnamese joined the Viet Minh in their struggle for independence against the French. They were motivated by a spirit of Nationalism and a hatred for the French colonialists. However, this nationalistic movement was under the guidance, direction and organization of Ho Chi Minh, who in concert with a small dedicated and well indoctrinated group of communists, subverted the revolution to their own ends.

3. (U) Following the ceasefire in 1954 Vietnam was partitioned into two sections; Communist North Vietnam under Ho Chi Minh and Free South Vietnam under Premier Ngo Dinh Diem. The communists were very careful, however, to leave a number of communist cadre in the south. These cadre formed the basic "hard core" communist element (VC) for the current insurgency against the government of South Vietnam. Today, Communist propaganda attempts to draw upon Vietnamese nationalistic sentiments by equaling American presence in South Vietnam with that of the French.

4. (U) Those alienated from the GVN.

a. (U) Grievances against the GVN have caused many disgruntled Vietnamese to join the VC. While these grievances take various forms, perhaps the best example, particularly in rural areas is dissatisfaction with the land reform program.

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b. (U) Under the 1957 land reform program, land was expropriated from landlords who held over the legal limit of 100 hectares of land. The government distributed this land to only about 10% of the landless tenant farmers, while the rest remained under government control.

c. (U) To the majority of the tenant farmers who did not acquire land in this manner, the rent control provisions of the program applied. The legal limit of rent payments was set at 25% of the main crop. Many objected to the payment of rent to the GVN. During the struggle against the French, which had kept the French landowners away in the cities, many peasants had cultivated the land rent free. Lack of security and an insufficient number of cadre for country wide enforcement of the rent control program aggravated grievances. Here in I Corps where land is scarce, rents well above the legal 25% were charged. In areas where security is not adequate, tenant farmers are often subject to dual taxation by GVN and VC. The communists are quick to exploit such grievances.

5. (U) An additional factor which also motivates some Vietnamese to join the VC is family loyalty. In a family - oriented society, many Vietnamese may feel almost obligated to join the VC if the members of the family are VC. Even if no one from a VC's family joins, the family may provide material and moral support to the VC. Others, feeling their chances of survival are better with the insurgents, have enlisted to avoid the GVN draft.

II The Insurgent

A. Organization, Command and Control.

1. (C) In northeastern Quang Tri Province, between the Demilitarized Zone route 9, and the Cua Viet River, are located one confirmed division with three subordinate regiments, one independent brigade-size unit (of artillery and infantry support) and one independent regiment (see map attached as inclosure 1). The major portions of an artillery division are deployed along the DMZ, with subordinate rocket battalions operating in the coastal plain east of Dong Ha and in base area 101. Elements of the 304th NVA Division are operating in the vicinity of Khe Sanh along with at least two regiments of the 308th division. At present the 312th NVA Regiment, two independent infantry battalions, a sapper battalion and a 122mm rocket battalion are located in proximity to Quang Tri City and will probably be used for renewed attacks in this area.

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2. (C) In Thua Thien Province is located the Tri - Thien military region headquarters which has been directing operations throughout most of the two northern provinces. Under its control in the Hue area are an estimated four regimental equivalents (803d, 90th, 6th, and 5th). This force is supported by two battalions of 29th R/325th regiments along the major infiltration route of Highway 547 and another infantry regiment operates in southeastern Thua Thien. At least one 122mm rocket battalion has been responsible for the shelling of the Hue-Phu Bai complex and an artillery regiment of two conventional artillery battalions and two anti-aircraft battalions has been assigned to protect the Ashau Valley line of communication and storage complex.

3. (C) Major enemy units south of the Thua Thien/Quang Nam border are under the control of Military Region 5 (MR5), which extends from this border south into II Corps. Under a Quang Nam control headquarters, subordinate to MR5 are three sapper battalions, three provincial battalions and two NVA independent infantry regiments supported by three 122mm rocket battalions. The 2d NVA Division, also subordinate to MR5, has a normal area of operation which includes the southern portion of Quang Nam and northern Quang Tin.

4. (C) Presently the 3d Regiment, 2d Division is located in north central Quang Tin. It was the 1st and 21st Regiments of the 2d Division that forced the abandonment of the Kham Duc Special Forces Camp on 12 May of this year. The 1st then moved to central Quang Tin Province and the 21st to northern II Corps. Also in Quang Tin Province there are three provincial force infantry battalions and one main force sapper battalion.

5. (C) In Quang Ngai Province the principal enemy units are under the operational control of two regimental headquarters. These units consist of three infantry battalions. Two sapper-trained battalions and one combat support battalion. Two regiments of the II Corps based 3d NVA division have recently moved into northern Quang Ngai Province.

6. (U) In addition to the principal military units listed, local Viet Cong units are scattered throughout the corps area. Communist controlled hamlets try to maintain squad-sized guerrilla organizations, villages a platoon, and districts a company.

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B. Logistics, Transportation and Communication.

1. (C) The enemy uses both land and water infiltration routes into the I Corps Area. Most of the infiltration of personnel and supplies takes place through the DMZ and along a series of 3-7 major roads in Laos which run north to south roughly parallel to the Corps boundary. These roads are capable of handling wheeled and tracked vehicles as well as towed artillery. They serve as major infiltration routes, not only for I Corps but for South Vietnam in general. In turn, they break down into several major road, trail and waterway networks which feed into all I Corps provinces. The primary land route through the eastern third of the DMZ crosses the Cua Viet River and follows the "Street Without Joy" to Hue. At the extreme eastern edge of the DMZ, the enemy is known to use the Ben Hai-Cua Viet Rivers, and the connecting waterway to infiltrate supplies and personnel into SVN. From the west, routes enter both north and south of Khe Sanh, into the Ba Long Valley, branching into the base areas 101 and 114.

2. (C) In Thua Thien Province, the western infiltration route is along the Aloui-Ashau Valley Highway, which serves as the primary logistical staging area for the I Corps Provinces South of Quang Tri. Leading east are three truck routes: One a recently constructed road leading toward Base Area 114, another connecting with route 547 to Hue and a new extension being developed south through Laos into Quang Nam. Funnelling from Ashau, the several river valley infiltration trail systems in Quang Nam Province appear as though they were a carefully planned distribution system. The most notable of these river valley is the Vu Gia which connects with the rivers flowing to Moi An and Danang.

3. (C) In Quang Ngai Province, the enemy continues south through Laos and enters into the province via the new Kham Duc 3 lane road which connects with highway # 14. From here, movement is to the north and south along Highway # 14, east into the Tra Bong Valley, southeast into the Ha Thanh Valley or south along the Song Re Valley. Enemy forces have also been known to continue farther south in Laos and to enter Quang Ngai by cutting across Kontum Province in II Corps, following Route 5B to Gia Vuc, Ba To, and Route #1.

4. (C) In addition to infiltration by land and river waterways, there is a limited amount of sea infiltration. This consists almost entirely of supplies rather than personnel. The majority of sea infiltrated supplies are legally manifested on sampans and originate at SVN ports such as Danang and Nha Trang. However, on occasion, the enemy has attempted to run 100 foot steel hulled trawlers loaded with arms and munitions into Cape Batangan in Quang Ngai Province. These efforts have been striking failures. In February 68, a trawler was intercepted and destroyed off Quang Ngai. Two trawlers were captured last year.

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C. Communist Involvement Strategy and Tactics.

1. (C) Of the Command and Control elements described above, the Tri-Thien-Hue MR is the one about which most is known. The following information is drawn from many intelligence sources and is indicative of Communist influence in the insurgency movement.

a. Background.

(1) In June 1961, North Vietnamese Army (NVA) Major General Don accompanied by fifth cadre, infiltrated into South Vietnam to establish the Military Region (MR) 5 Headquarters and the headquarters of its subordinate Northern Subregion.

(2) During 1961 and 1962, the Northern Subregion subordinate headquarters, a bare organizational framework with few operational units, had the responsibility for controlling insurgent activities in VC Quang Tri and Thua Thien Provinces. In 1964, however, the Northern Subregion began to mobilize organic military units which were supplemented by NVA combat units infiltrated from North Vietnam throughout 1965. With the NVA-augmented combat force, the Northern Subregion planned to conduct seize-and-secure operations in the heavily populated coastal plains area of VC Quang Tri and Thua Thien Provinces. As part of this offensive plan, the district-level Hue City Committee was redesignated the Hue City Unit and was transferred from the control of VC Thua Thien Province Party Committee to the direct control of the Northern Subregion Headquarters.

(3) With the increased militarization of the insurgency in the northern provinces, the MR5 organization established in 1961, including the Northern Subregion, proved inadequate for its assigned tasks. Because of MR 5's expansive area of responsibility, the headquarters was incapable of exercising effective command control. Evidence that Hanoi recognized this deficiency appeared between June and August 1966, when the Northern Subregion was renamed the Northern Front in preparation for its upgrading to MR status. During late 1966, the Northern Front was upgraded to full MR status and renamed the Tri-Thien-Hue MR, directly subordinate to the NVA High Command in North Vietnam.

b. Organization of the Tri-Thien-Hue MR.

(1) Currently, the Tri-Thien-Hue MR area of responsibility includes VC Quang Tri and Thua Thien Provinces and an indeterminate area of Laos contiguous to the western borders of these two provinces.

(2) The Party Committee of the Tri-Thien-Hue MR, which has the overall responsibility for the political organization within the

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It, meets periodically to make broad policy decisions. Subordinate to the Party Committee are the following committees and Sections:

(a) The current Affairs Committee is responsible to the party Committee for the daily administration of the MR. The Current Affairs Committee implements policy received from the Party Committee and assigns specific tasks both to subordinate functional elements within the MR Party Committee and to subordinate province organizations.

(b) The MR National Front for the Liberation of South Vietnam (NFLSVN) Committee provides the cover behind which the Party carries on the insurgency in MR5.

(c) The organization Section performs functions similar to those performed by the G-1 of a military staff. The section keeps personal history statements of MR personnel, makes Party personnel assignments, writes efficiency reports, and maintains Party discipline.

(d) The Finance and Economy Section prepares an annual budget for approval by the MR Party Committee. This section also oversees a complex tax collection and dispersal system that receives, accounts for, and allocates Party resources, including food, war material and money.

(e) The Propaganda and Training Section is responsible for developing and disseminating VC propaganda to which the population of MR 5 is constantly subjected. This section is also responsible for the training of VC propagandists who work throughout the MR.

(f) The Civil Health Section is responsible for public health in the MR and for formulating policy covering the medical treatment of members of the VC political infrastructure, members of insurgent military units, and inhabitants of insurgent-controlled areas.

(g) The Administration Section performs the various clerical functions for the Tri-Thien-Hue MR Party Committee.

c. Organization of the Provinces and Subregions within the Tri-Thien-Hue MR.

(1) In May 1967, a resolution issued by the Tri-Thien-Hue MR dissolved the province Party Committees of VC Quang Tri and Thua Thien Provinces. These province-level organizations have apparently been replaced by interdistrict or subregion echelons, each of which administers several districts. Four subregions appear to have replaced the two province-level committees. Their organization corresponds to that of the VC province echelon as it exists throughout most of the rest of South Vietnam.

(2) Four identified subordinate sections exist in each of the subregions: The Executive Section, The Executive Cadre Affairs Section, the Coordination and Operations Committee, and the Finance and Economy Section. Two of the sections, however, seem to have similar functions: The Executive Section and the Executive Cadre Section.

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d. Organization of the Quang Ha Committee.

(1) Recently created within the Tri-Thien-Hue MR is the Quang Ha Committee. The Committee has authority, equal to that of a district, over Quang Tri City, Dong Ha Town, and the villages immediately surrounding these two urban areas. The Quang Ha Committee is composed of the following sections:

- (a) Party Committee Secretary with an office staff of two cadre.
- (b) Current Affairs Section, composed of two members.
- (c) Finance and Economy Section, composed of two members.
- (d) Commo-liaison Section.
- (e) Province Capital Unit.
- (f) Public Security Section.
- (g) People's Public Security Force to investigate and keep records concerning the general population.
- (h) Assault Security Force to plan and execute abductions and assassinations.
- (i) VC Quang Tri Province Detention facility.
- (j) Interior guard to provide prison security for VC detention camps.

e. Summary. The formation of the Tri-Thien-Hue MR, with its subregions, and the Quang Ha Committee are design to enable the VC to sustain the level of political activity necessary to regain or increase their popular support. Specifically, the VC hope to revitalize their infrastructure in rural areas and strengthen it in urban areas.

2. (U) The Tri-Thien-Hue Military Region is used as an example because of the extent of information known about it. Less information has been gathered pertaining to communist influence in the remainder of the Corps Area, however it probably follows the pattern established in the Tri-Thien-Hue MR.

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D. Intelligence Activity.

1. (U) Both the VC and the NVA use personal reconnaissance as the primary source of information in the formulation battle planning. PWs and documents reveal that a one to three-man reconnaissance team is usually sent to the prospective target area for periods of one day to one week of observation. PWs state that they are generally expected back at their unit to give a full report 3-4 days prior to a planned attack. These PW, captured with notes and maps, have generally had accurate intelligence concerning personalities and agencies. They are particularly weak on correctly identifying US agencies occupying Vietnamese buildings. Maps and sketches have been very accurate and elaborately done. From such sketches and maps, sand tables could easily be constructed for war-gaming the attack. However, this rigid memorization of each physical feature has proven a disadvantage in the past when any significant changes were made in defenses by GVN/FWMAF.

2. (U) The activity of unit recon operations are supplemented by intelligence gathered from children and very young (12-14 years) recruited agents.

III Local Government Counterinsurgency actions.

A. I Corps Counterinsurgency actions.

1. (C) Military Organization, authority, and responsibilities.

a. Vietnamese military strength in the I Corps area consists of two infantry divisions, one separate infantry regiment, a ranger group, two armored cavalry regiments, plus various support elements.

b. The ARVN divisions are organized with three regiments of four battalions per division. An exception exists in the 1st Infantry Division in which a fourth Regiment has been added. Additionally two artillery battalions (105MM Howitzer) an engineer battalion, and a reconnaissance company are organic to the division.

c. In I Corps, the two infantry divisions, the 1st and 2d, have been given areas of responsibility corresponding to provincial boundaries. The 1st Division control the northern two provinces, Quang Tri and Thua Thien while the 2d Division is responsible for the southern provinces of Quang Ngai and Quang Tin. The primary responsibilities of these divisions are the safeguarding of the population, protection of lines of communication, and furthering the governments span of control. In actuality, this mission can be summarized as support of Revolutionary Development.

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d. The separate Infantry Regiment, 51st, is organized with 4 battalions. This unit has been assigned territorial responsibility as have the infantry divisions. The 51st Regiment is responsible for Quang Nam Province and Danang Special Sector.

e. I Corps Ranger Group consists of three battalions and are employed as the corps reserve. In their capacity as Corps reserve, employment of the unit is at the discretion of the Corps Commander. Experience indicates that this group, or elements thereof, have been employed in combat operations on a continuing basis.

f. The 4th and 7th Armored Cavalry Squadrons represent ARVN's only armor capability in the Corps Area. The main vehicle is the M113 APC, equipped with a 50 caliber and two 30 caliber machineguns. These vehicles are being effectively used as light tanks in support of infantry operations.

g. Artillery, other than that found in the infantry divisions is under Corps control. The Corps Artillery consists of one battalion of 155MM howitzers and an additional two battalions currently being organized (one each 105MM and 155MM howitzer battalion). The artillery units are employed by platoon and in this role provides fire support to 90% of the populated Corps Area.

h. In addition to the combat elements of I Corps, various combat support and service support units are found. Among these are an engineer group, military police battalion, and a logistical command.

i. Vietnamese air forces in the Corps area consist of the 41st Air Wing. The wing provides combat support through a squadron of A1E fighters; Helicopters support with a squadron of H34 Helicopters and observation/psy-war operations with a squadron of assorted light aircraft.

j. Naval operations are conducted by six coastal junk groups in I Corps. The primary responsibility of these Naval units is to conduct MARKET TIME operations -- preventing the resupply of personnel and supplies over the coastal waters and beaches of I Corps.

2. (C) Civilian organization, authority, and coordination between civil and military.

a. Hamlet: The hamlet is the lowest level at which organized civil government is found. Civil government at this level consists of a hamlet chief, elected by popular vote, and an advisory council (usually made up of the elders of the hamlet). Government at this level handles local grievances and public works within the hamlet.

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b. Village: Village government consists of a village chief (elected), a citizens council (each hamlet of the village electing one member to sit on the council) and an administrative council (appointed by the district chief). Village government is responsible for budget, collecting taxes/public works, legal proceedings, law and order, and self defense.

c. District level. The district government, at this time is appointed by the province chief. Future plans call for the district chief to be elected by popular vote of the district, however, to date, the elections have not been held. Assisting the district chief, is a council (appointed) made up of fisheries, agricultural, census/grievance, public health/education, and self defense representatives. The District conducts all business that the village does and in addition oversees census taking, agriculture/wildlife management, and direction of Popular Forces.

d. Province: The Province chief is currently appointed by the National Government, although, plans call for him to be elected in the future. In addition to the Province Chief, various administrative sections exist to conduct the governmental functions. These sections include a Security and Military Affairs Division, a Finance Section, a Socio-Economic section, and an administration section. The province government discharges complete governmental functions at that level.

e. Civil-Military Cooperation. Generally, throughout I Corps, district and province chiefs are military officers appointed to hold governmental positions. With these military personnel filling the positions, and with their allegiance to the Army, close military-civilian cooperation has evolved.

B. Forces

1. (C) Military Forces.

a. Combat tactics used, and effectiveness thereof.

(1) The primary mission of ARVN - the support of Revolutionary Development has dictated to a large extent the tactics used. The principal tactics (operations) used by ARVN are combat sweeps, cordon and search, and security.

(2) Overall, ARVN can be considered effective, in that they satisfactorily conduct all three types of operations and ARVN units seem to be most effective in their security type operation. This can be attributed to (1) lacking the organic fire support needed in offensive operations and (2)

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lacking training in maneuver with fire support (when fire support is available from US assets) where as in the security role, preplanned fires and fire support within their capabilities can be effectively employed. However, in terms of kill ratio and total enemy kills, the combat sweep operations have yielded the best results. The better results, in terms of kills, can be attributed to going to where the enemy is located rather than remaining in the security area and awaiting the enemy at a time of his choosing.

2. (C) Paramilitary forces/police.

a. Paramilitary organizations consist of four types: Regional Forces, Popular Forces, Civilian Irregular Defense Groups, and Field Forces Police. These units supplement ARVN and constitute about half of the armed Vietnamese strength in I Corps.

b. Regional Forces are recruited by, organized, and under the control of Province. The Regional Forces (RF) soldier receives the same amount of training (9 weeks) as the ARVN soldier and is comparable in fighting quality. Regional Forces, being under the control of the Province Chief are normally assigned in a security role and conduct occasional cordon and search and combat sweep operations. An exception to this is the 59th RF battalion, which is assigned to Quang Nam Sector where they participate in a greater number of non-security type missions.

c. Popular Forces (PF) are recruited at Hamlet/Village level, are given 12 weeks basic training, and returned to the village/hamlet where they perform security type missions.

d. Civilian Irregular Defense Groups (CIDG) are recruited and trained by the Vietnamese Special Forces personnel and advised by US Special Forces personnel and as such, their operations do not come under the purview of this advisory group. The CIDG operate in the western portion of the Corps Zone and perform intelligence and interdiction functions.

e. The Field Forces Police represent civilian authority in I Corps. Field Forces Police are administratively formed in to company size units and effectively handle normal police type functions. In addition, the Field Forces Police are called upon to accompany military operations, particularly cordon and search operations, to facilitate civilian population control.

C. Intelligence and counterintelligence.

1. (S) Organization activity and capability.

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a. Counterintelligence and Positive Collection activity is not within the cognizance of the US Army Advisory Group. (See Sec VI, Lessons Learned)

b. The G2, I Corps and his staff, to include division and sector G/S-2s are professionally qualified and well experienced to perform the necessary intelligence functions to provide the I CTZ CG with the support he needs to conduct successful military operations against the enemy. The intelligence system lacks the necessary equipment to fully utilize the skill of the personnel, however. As an example, ARVN is fully capable of quickly and completely obtaining all intelligence information from PWs -- if they can get the PW from the battlefield to the interrogator. At this juncture, US Army Advisory Group must supply transportation, usually in the form of helicopters. As another example, ARVN Air Photo Interpreters are highly skilled technicians who do an outstanding job of analysis -- when they can borrow the necessary equipment from the local MIBARS detachment or have excess items transferred to them through US Army Advisory Group. Some of the Sector S2s have excellent penetration agents/nets into the VC infrastructure but still require US support for payment of these sources at a level adequate to justify the risks he is taking.

c. Communications, is limited to occasional use of US channels. (See Sec VI, Lessons Learned)

d. Organization to combat the VC infrastructure is not within the cognizance of the USAAG (See Sec VI, Lessons Learned).

e. US classified information receives careful handling and adequate protection in document form. ARVN generally does not hesitate to compromise either their or our classified information by talk here, however.

D. Military Civic Action and its Effectiveness.

1. (C) Military Civic Action in I Corps has improved considerably during the last year. The large influx of US units with their material resources and technical skills is primarily the reason for this improvement.

2. (C) It is unfortunate that ARVN units do not have the funds, and materials, that the US units have. Under present conditions ARVN Military Civic Action consists entirely of the use of its only asset, its manpower pool. Although every effort is made to give the impression that material assistance is of GVN origin, no one is in doubt who finances the programs.

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3. (C) Short term, low cost, high impact projects continue to be the most effective and long lasting projects. It is essential, however, that US and ARVN commanders remember that Civic Action has as its cardinal rule "Help the People Help Themselves". Participation by the people is essential to development of community spirit, a sense to the government and pride in their accomplishments. In addition, the VC often destroy projects unilaterally completed by US or Vietnamese troops. Because of the negative psychological effect, they are cautious about attack of those completed by the people themselves.

4. (C) Project Recovery.

a. In January 1968, the VC TBT terror campaign created an urgent need and a great opportunity to demonstrate GVN leadership, provide emergency care for dispossessed and displaced and rally international sympathy. Project Recovery was launched to cope with this acute situation via best use of all available assets, both civilian and military, US and GVN. The objective was to restore the situation to at least pre-TBT standards as soon as possible.

b. Project Recovery was pushed with increasing vigor during the first six months in an attempt to meet the President's goal of completion by 1 June 1968. The sheer magnitude of the problem in some provinces, the lack of trained staff, the lack of transportation, and an evident desire on the part of Province Chiefs to conduct an accurate and honest operation precluded completion within the time indicated. Generally speaking, by the end of June, victims in the province capitals and immediate environs had been taken care of. The area of Hue, itself, was special case where the magnitude of reconstruction approximates that of the rest of I Corps put together.

c. The commanding General I Corps, anticipates that the programs of Project Recovery will continue for several months prior to its disbandment.

E. Political Action.

1. (U) Psychological Warfare is conducted largely along conventional lines. All media are used including air, ground and waterborne broadcasts, leaflets, posters, banners and movies, radio and television operated by the Vietnamese Information Service are also used.

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(a) In addition to conventional media, the Vietnamese have specialized elements, **Cultural Drama** and **Armed Propaganda Teams**. Both are engaged in what is generally acknowledged as the most effective means of propaganda, **Face-to-Face operations**.

(b) **Cultural Drama Teams** are trained groups of theatrical performers who present entertaining plays or musical shows mixed with propaganda in any portion. These performances are extremely well received by all segments of the population and are invaluable in communicating with the public and gaining intelligence information.

(c) **Armed Propaganda Teams** are comprised entirely of Hoi Chanh (returnees), who have volunteered and been specially trained for this duty. Their primary mission is to conduct **Face-to-Face operations** in contested areas. The teams are extremely effective when properly used and are particularly credible in the rural areas where on many occasions they are talking to persons who knew them when they were VC.

Isolation techniques to deny guerrillas support.

Resettlement of Populace. Resettlement of personnel is at the heart of the program. In the insurgency program however it is a very important element in denying the guerrilla the support that without he can not live. The government have willingly and in some cases unwillingly been resettled by the GVN with US support selects the area for their new homes, providing them with building material food and enough money to tide the family until they can be resettled on a job secured. Additionally refugees are provided with new uniforms who are cared for by GVN. Much emphasis is placed on the proper care of its refugees as they are most receptive to the government and when taken care of by an interested government become staunch supporters of the government.

Integration with Public. A novel, unprecedented program exists known as the Chieu Hoi program (open arms). This program is designed to provide the enemy, VC and NVA the opportunity to rally to the government without fear of the consequences. The Hoi Chanh (returnee) are sent to a Hoi Chanh Center where they are re-educated and then sent back to their homes or remain and learn a trade. This program has been successful during the two first years of its existence. In the first two years areas excepting I Corps showed a 75% decline in the number of returnees compared to previous year. I Corps shows, however, at the end of June 1968. The total returnee figure for I Corps through 30 June 1968 are 1,336 as compared with 1,266 for the same time last year.

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c. Military isolation techniques. Attempts to isolate the insurgents from their source of supply by military means have found varying degrees of success in I Corps the principal military programs to deny this support are MARKETTIME waterways control, and rice/salt denial.

(1) MARKETTIME is a joint Vietnamese Navy - US Navy/Coast Guard attempt to prevent personnel and supplies to be infiltrated into I Corps by sea. This program has provided quite successful in preventing seaborne infiltration, however, outside supplies have not been stopped because of the overland supply routes (II B covers this in great detail).

(2) The inland waterways control program is designed to prevent the insurgents from using the waterways as means of transporting personnel and equipment. The program consists of curfews, off limits waterways, and spot checks vessels using the waterways. The program has enjoyed success in the government controlled portion of the Corps as indicated by the relatively few curfew violations and decrease of contraband found on vessels.

(3) Rice/salt denial programs are aimed at preventing insurgent elements from attaining the critical items of rice and salt from the civilian populace. Salt in I Corps is found in Coastal plains region, which is controlled to a large extent by the government forces and have been effective in denying salt to the insurgents as pointed out by the fact that VMA infiltration are now carrying salt with them from North Vietnam. Rice is controlled through Government supported harvesting, protected storage, and destruction of enemy controlled rice.

IV. US Role in Support of Local Government.

A. US Country Team: Does not fall under the cognizance of the US Advisory Group.

B. US Military Forces:

1. (C) Degree of Involvement: US Military Forces are currently advising Vietnamese Military Forces and, in addition, conducting full scale independent military action. US Forces involved include advisory personnel, US Army (3 divisions plus support units), US Marines (2 divisions, 1 Air Wing, plus support units,) US Air Force, US Navy and US Coast Guard. US Military strength in the I Corps area amounts to approximately 100,000 men.

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2. (C) Command Structure and Relationship with Government Forces:

a. Structure of US Forces major units in I Corps are denoted in Inclosure 2.

b. The relationship between US Military and Vietnamese Forces is one of mutual coordination. Both US and Vietnamese military units maintain national integrity through separate commands. However, all operations are coordinated with the respective counter headquarters prior to initiation of action. This coordination takes place at all levels of command, down to and including company sized operations. In facilitating this coordination, liaison officers are exchanged between US and Vietnamese units and generally this concept has proved effective.

3. (U) Levels at which US personnel are actually located: Advisory personnel are found at all Vietnamese battalion sized units and larger. Additionally, advisory teams are located at District and Province level government. Inclosure 3 depicts the advisory effort in I Corps.

4. (U) Advisory Functions Performed at Each Level:

a. Battalion: The battalion advisory team advises and assists the battalion commander on all issues and questions that arise concerning the operation of the unit. This advice concerns such issues as leadership, tactics, operations, supply and administration. Further, the team assists through advising and instructing with regards to weapons, communications equipment and maintenance procedures. The team also acts as liaison with US units and as fire support coordinators.

b. Regimental: Regimental teams carry out similar functions to battalion teams. In addition, the regimental team provides staff advisory assistance to the unit commander's principal staff officers.

c. Division: At division level, the advisory team performs all functions accomplished by battalion and regimental teams. Further, it provides staff and technical supervision to personnel engaged in all facets of the division's operation.

d. Corps: The Corps advisory team accomplishes functions similar to the previously discussed teams, however, on a more detailed, technical level.

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e. District and Province: District and Province teams vary from the military unit advisory teams in that they are composed of composite military/CORDS personnel and are under operational control of the Deputy for JOMC, Region I. These teams advise district/province chiefs and their staffs on all aspects of the government and military operations within the territory.

5. (C) Effectiveness of US Military Support.

a. Evaluation of US Military support effectiveness of other than advisory efforts is not within the cognizance of the US Army Advisory Group.

b. The advisory effort within I Corps is considered overall to be effective as proven by the increased effectiveness of the Vietnamese Army. This is further indicated by a current study to determine the feasibility of cutting back advisory efforts in certain fields of ARVN proficiency.

6. (C) Areas of Inadequacy Regarding Training and Weapons.

a. Training.

(1) The primary deficiency in the area of training is that training centers have not kept pace with the increased draft. Training centers are currently staffed and equipped to accommodate the number of troops called under 1966-1967 quotas, which is far short of 1968 recruits. Deficiencies are noted in insufficient cadre, inadequate housing and mess facilities, and a lack of sufficient weapons and ammunition for training.

(2) Additional training universally needed is marksmanship and fire control. ARVN soldiers have a tendency to fire at their own volition, irrespective of fire commands. Also, troops have the tendency of substituting a high volume of fire for aimed fire. These problems indicate a lack of training and ~~can~~ overcome through increased emphasis in the training program.

(3) The inability of coordinating fire and maneuver, with few exceptions, points out the need for additional training in this area. habitually, ARVN units will call for fire support, and not use it to support their maneuver. Instead, units will wait for the termination of the supporting fires before implementing their scheme of maneuver.

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(4) The field of communications security needs renewed emphasis in training. Although quite careful with classified information in the written form, ARVN does not hesitate to transmit the same information in the clear over radio, teletype, and telephone.

b. Weapons. ARVN's primary deficiency in the area of weaponry lies in lack of support weapons. To support units in I Corps, ARVN can muster only 5 artillery battalions (four 105MM and one 155MM). At present, two additional battalions are being organized, however, this will only marginally fill the need for artillery support. Currently, this void in artillery support is being filled by support from US Artillery units, but to insure ARVN's independent capability, additional fire support is needed. In addition to increased artillery, Vietnamese Forces need the capability of helicopter gunships and increased tactical aircraft for support roles.

c. United States Information Agency: Does not fall under the cognizance of the US Army Advisory Group.

d. Agency for International Development: Does not fall under the cognizance of the US Army Advisory Group.

V. Third Country Support to the Local Government.

A. Countries and Extent of Assistance.

1. (U) Australia: In the I Corps area, 56 Australian advisors have been integrated into the advisory effort. These advisors perform duties within the structure of the MACV Advisory Group and are located in battalion, regiment, division and Corps advisory teams.

2. (U) Nationalist China: Two Chinese political/psychological warfare advisors are found in the Advisory Group. These two officers advise the I Corps political warfare section pertinent to techniques and operations in this field.

3. (U) Germany: The West German government has provided medical aid to the Vietnamese civilian population through mobile medical teams and the hospital ship Hegoland. Additionally, technical instruction has been provided through the establishment and staffing of a technical trade school in Danang. German assistance has been coordinated between the Republic of South Vietnam and the West German Governments and as such, little coordination is implemented between US support and West German support.

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4.. (U) Korea: Korean elements in I Corps consist of one Brigade of Korean Marines and advisory personnel. The Marine Brigade closely coordinates their activities with US III Marine Amphibious Force, who in turn coordinates with ARVN. Korean advisors assist in physical training and self defense techniques with teams of instructor/advisors located throughout the Corps area.

5. Philippine Islands: The Philippines have sent a number of agricultural advisors who work within the CORDS advisory program. Philippino agricultural advisors are located at region and province level with their actions being coordinated through CORDS channels.

B. Coordination with US Support: In I Corps, generally all third country support is coordinated closely with US support. The one exception to this is the West German medical assistance, which, even though not coordinated with the US, has been effectively utilized.

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VI: Lessons Learned.

A. (S) It is highly disadvantageous not to have operational control of all advisory units functioning within I CTZ. The result is that the ARVN S2 at Sector has, in actuality, three intelligence advisors who have direct access to him and only one of these is under the operational control of DSA, USA Advisory Group.

1. The Senior Intelligence Advisor, Sector, is the USA Advisory Group intelligence representative and is qualified to advise his counterpart on all intelligence matters - - combat, CI and collection.

2. The Province Advisor Intelligence Representative (PAIR) advises the S2 on matters connected with positive collection. He is under operational control of 1st Bn (PROV), 525th MI Group.

3. The PHOENIX Sector Military advisor is the point of contact with the S2 on matters pertaining to the elimination of the infrastructure. He is under operational control of PHOENIX, which is in no way connected with USA Advisory Group. Additionally, the advisors to the sub-sector S2 are only PHOENIX personnel whose limited function is infrastructure elimination. Again, they are not under operational control of USA Advisory Group.

B. (S) The result of the lack of unity of command is a duplication in the use of manpower, incomplete advisory representation at sub-sector, and a lack of tasking control. I strongly recommend that the Senior Intelligence Advisor at each level be the only point of contact with his S2 counterpart, that all personnel who advise an ARVN staff officer be under the full operational control (to include rating) of the DSA, USA Advisory Group, and that the Senior Intelligence Advisor at Corps level have staff supervision over all such personnel.

C. (C) The single physical item which would most improve ARVN capacity to rapidly, accurate and more securely receive and transmit intelligence, is a separate on-line crypto teletypewriter facility between Corps, Division and Sectors. Single-user radio circuits between regiments and division, and between sub-sector and sector would round out the system. Such a facility would triple or quadruple the value of intelligence now being received.

D. Vietnamese training centers have not kept pace with the increase in number of ARVN recruits. I recommend that increased support to training centers be implemented by the Vietnamese Government. This support should include boosting cadres, better physical facilities, and increasing weapons and ammunition allotments.

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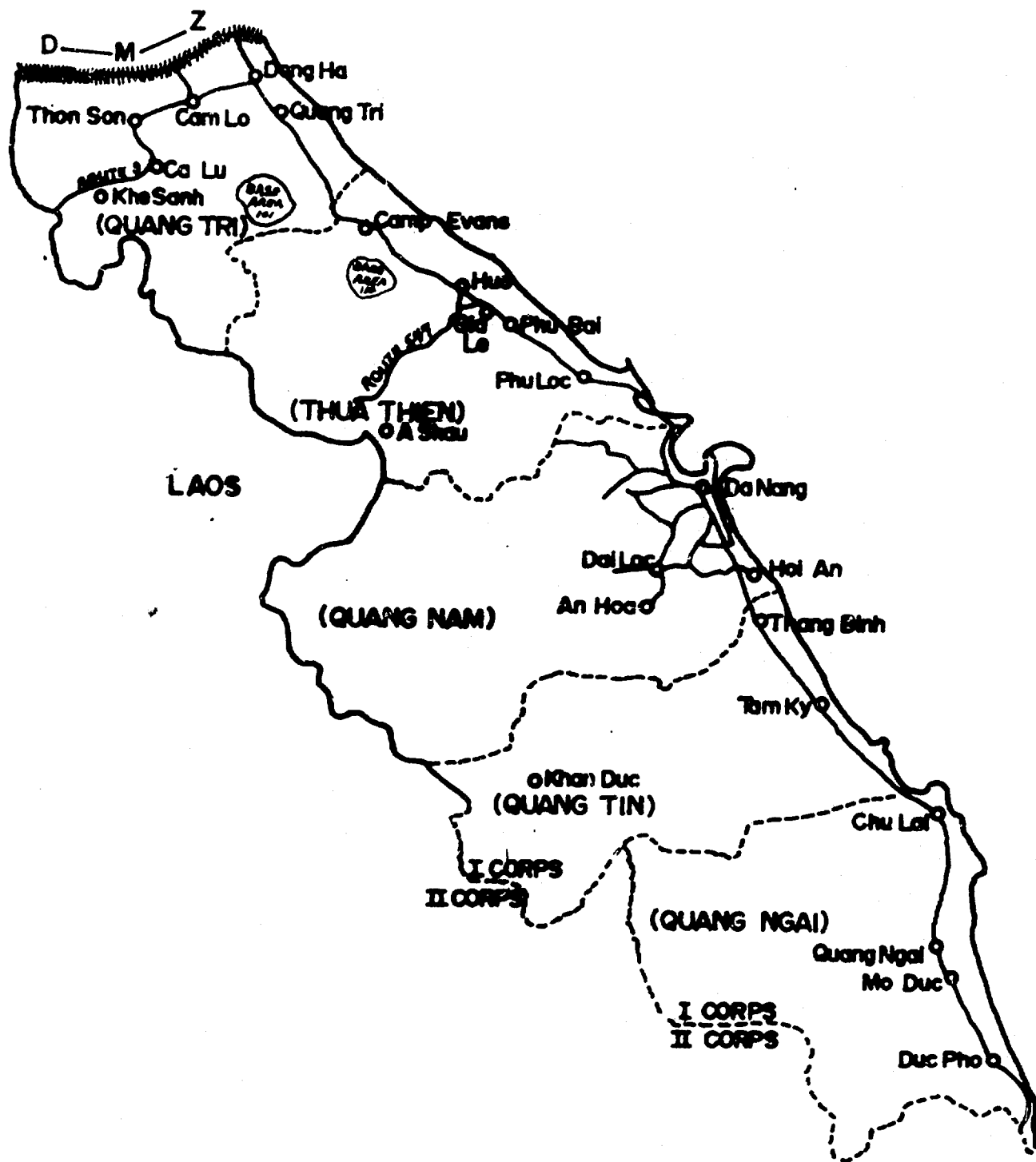
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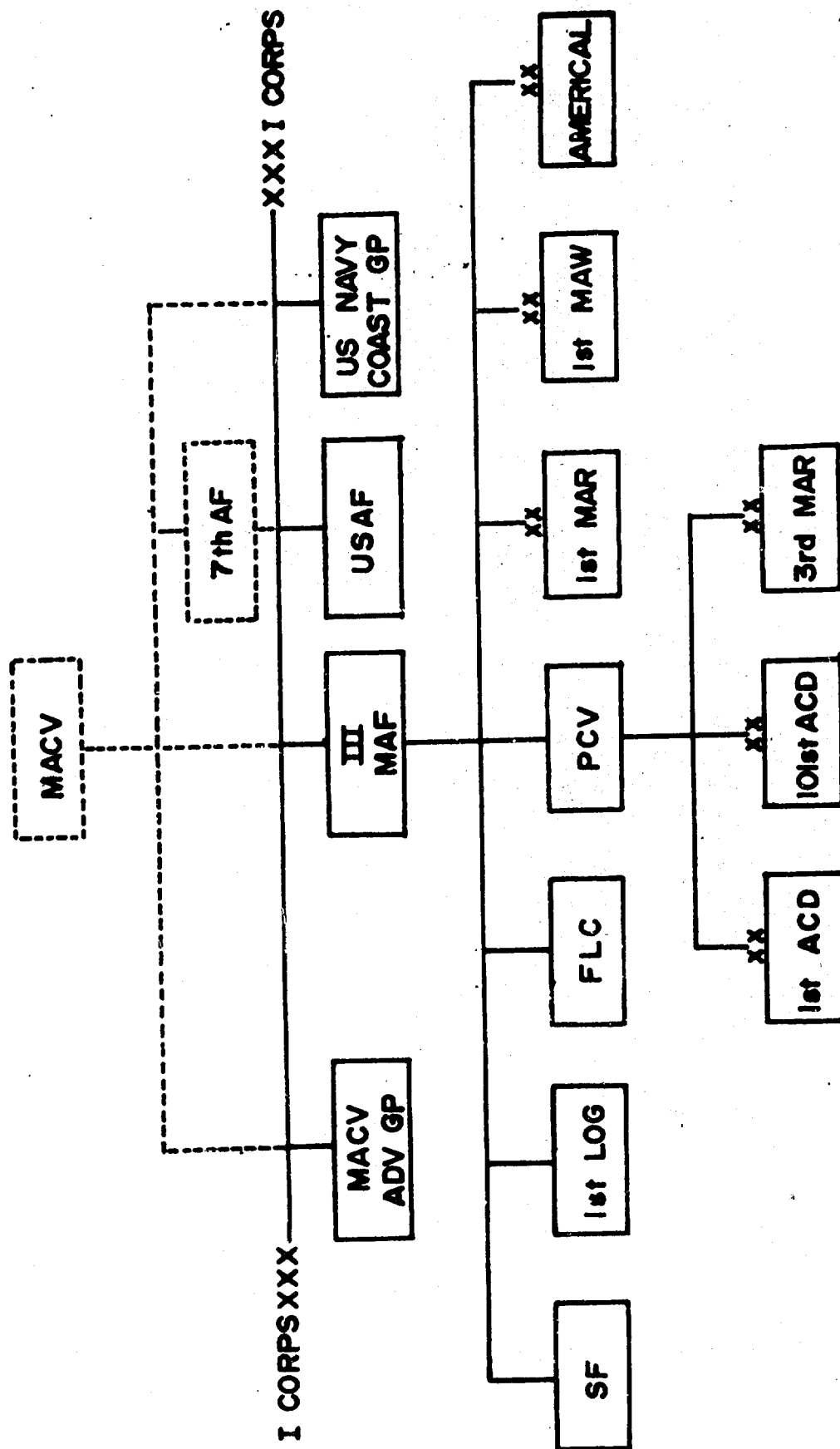
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E. Fire support organic to Vietnamese forces is inadequate. Consideration should be given to increasing the authorized number of artillery units and tactical aircraft squadrons. Additionally, helicopter gunships should be allocated to ARVN.

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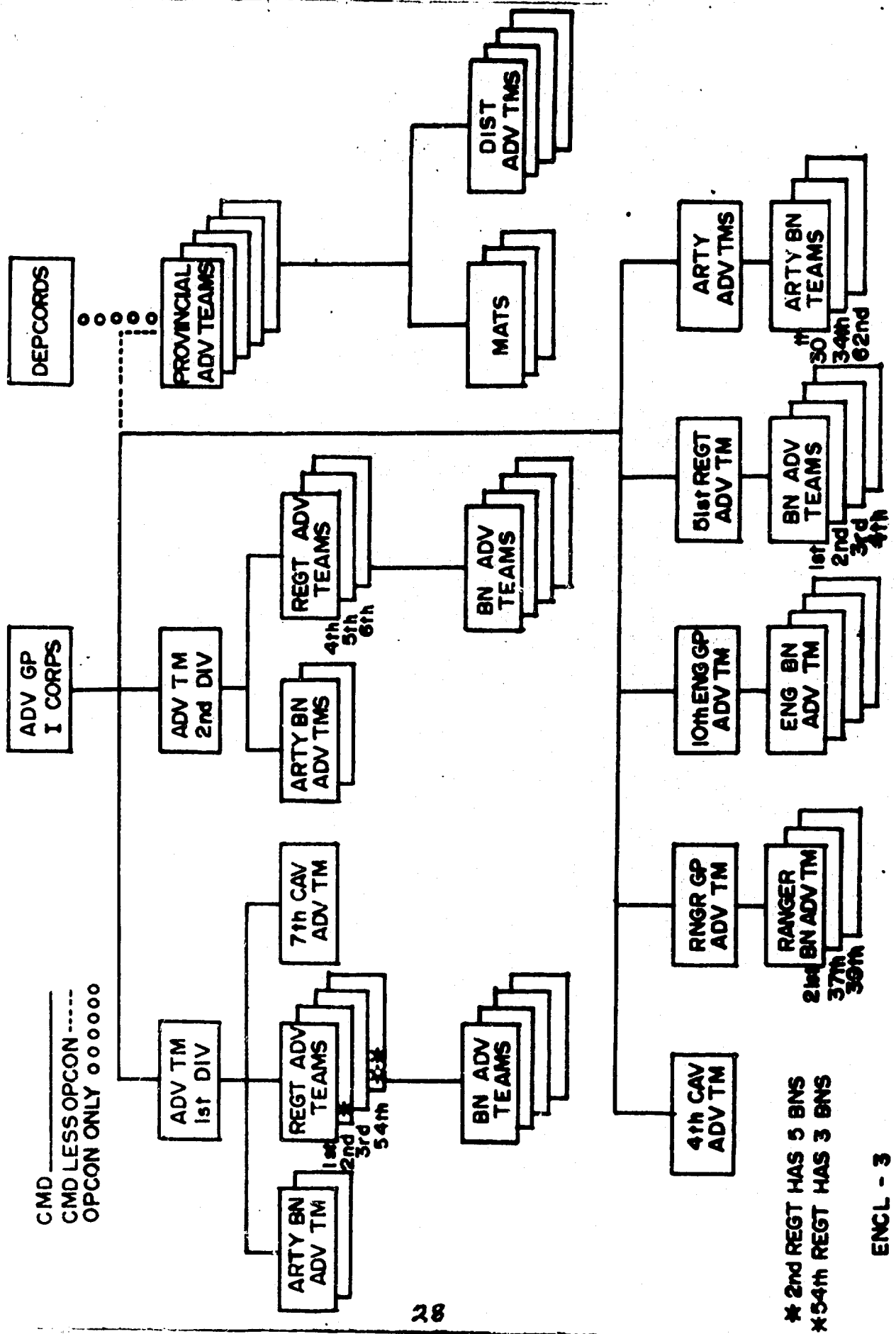




MAJOR US MILITARY UNITS LOCATED IN I CORPS

ENCL - 2

ADVISORY TEAMS IN I CORPS



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